

Crookes History Booklets

These short explorations of local history topics were compiled by Constance Hallwright

Also known as 'The Bustle Lady'

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Famous people who lived in Crookes

Just beyond the boundary of Crookes lived John Armitage, owner of the decorative terracotta works, who in 1876 built a fabulous house at 91 Crookes Road, which later became the Etruria House Hotel. His works was located off Devonshire Street, and the building housing his offices/showroom still survives, lavishly decorated with examples of his wares, like corbels, heads, scrolls, even statues. The fabulous decoration served not just as an advertisement, but as a 24-hour catalogue of his stock – people could pick out what they'd like for their own houses, and see what it might actually look like in situ. This just proves that it's possible to make a great deal of money out of posh folk who want to show off their wealth.

Isaac Dodds was a locomotive manufacturer and Superintendent of the Sheffield and Rotherham Railway from 1839 to 1842 – the town's first railway. He started out as one of the first apprentices of Robert Stephenson, so he obviously learnt a few things about building and running railways. He also made improvements to the method of supplying gas for illumination in 1841. The fact that he is recorded as living at number 13 Townend Street in 1881 may have had something to do with Crookes getting a gas supply laid on as the houses were built. He lived from 1801 to 1882.

Horatio Bright lived for a while around 1871 at 8 Townend Street. He was one of Sheffield's most eccentric characters, and one of the Crookes residents who does qualify as a Steel Magnate. He was a partner in the steel manufacturing firm Turton, Bright & Co., who made high-quality dies for the Royal Mint. In later years, he lived at Lydgate Hall in 1885, until his death in 1905. It was common for the roads containing the earliest houses to be renumbered when the terraces filled in the gaps, and this appears to have occurred on Townend Street, so the houses presently numbered as 8 and 13 are not those which would have borne those numbers originally.

Henry Elliot Hoole, owner of the Green Lane Works near Kelham Island, built Crookesmoor House in 1852. This was a very grand residence, set back from the road, and had very large grounds, which stretched up Conduit Road and along Northumberland Road. He was elected Lord Mayor in 1859. He started out as a file manufacturer, his firm being Hoole, Staniforth & Co., but when he spotted the beginning of the building boom, due to the expanding population in Sheffield, he set up making fire-grates, fenders, stoves and various utilitarian household objects in cast iron, and made a fortune as a result. He exhibited his wares at the Great Exhibition, and got a first prize medal!